

A new species of *Lepanthes* (Orchidaceae) from French Guyana

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ABSTRACT

A new species of *Lepanthes* is described from French Guyana, the second species known to be attributed to the country. It is distinguished by the longiciliate, lepanthiform sheaths of the ramicauls; a short, distichous raceme borne behind the leaf; broadly ovate sepals and petals; and a bilobed lip with an external, bisegmented, pubescent appendix.

KEY WORDS

Lepanthes cremersii,
Orchidaceae,
French Guyana.

RÉSUMÉ

Une nouvelle espèce de *Lepanthes* (Orchidaceae) de Guyane Française. Une nouvelle espèce de *Lepanthes* est décrite de Guyane Française, c'est la seconde espèce connue de ce pays. Elle se distingue par les gaines foliaires sur les axes longuement ciliées ; par le court racème de fleurs distiques qui se développe à l'arrière de la feuille ; par les sépales et les pétales largement ovés ; et par le labelle bilobé avec un appendice externe bisegmenté et pubescent.

MOTS CLÉS

Lepanthes cremersii,
Orchidaceae,
Guyane Française.

Of approximately 800 species of *Lepanthes* Sw. known in the American tropics, only three have been attributed to the Guyanas (*L. helicocephala* Rchb.f., *L. ruscifolia* Rchb.f. reported but unconfirmed from Suriname and *L. thoerleae* Luer from Suriname), only *L. helicocephala* having been recorded in French Guyana. The latter is morphologically stable in its wide distribution in the Amazon basin as far as Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

Lepanthes cremersii Luer, sp. nov.

Planta mediocris ramicaulium vaginis longiciliatis, racemo post folium congesto disticho quam folio ovato brevior, sepalis late ovatis obtusis, petalis transverse bilobatis, lobis latis obtusis subaequalibus, labelli laminae infra medium ovatis apice acutis, appendice extus bisegmentata pubescenti.

TYPE.— *Cremers & Crozier 15176*, French Guyana: Mont Chauve, alt. 100 m, 23 Apr. 1997, (holo-, P).

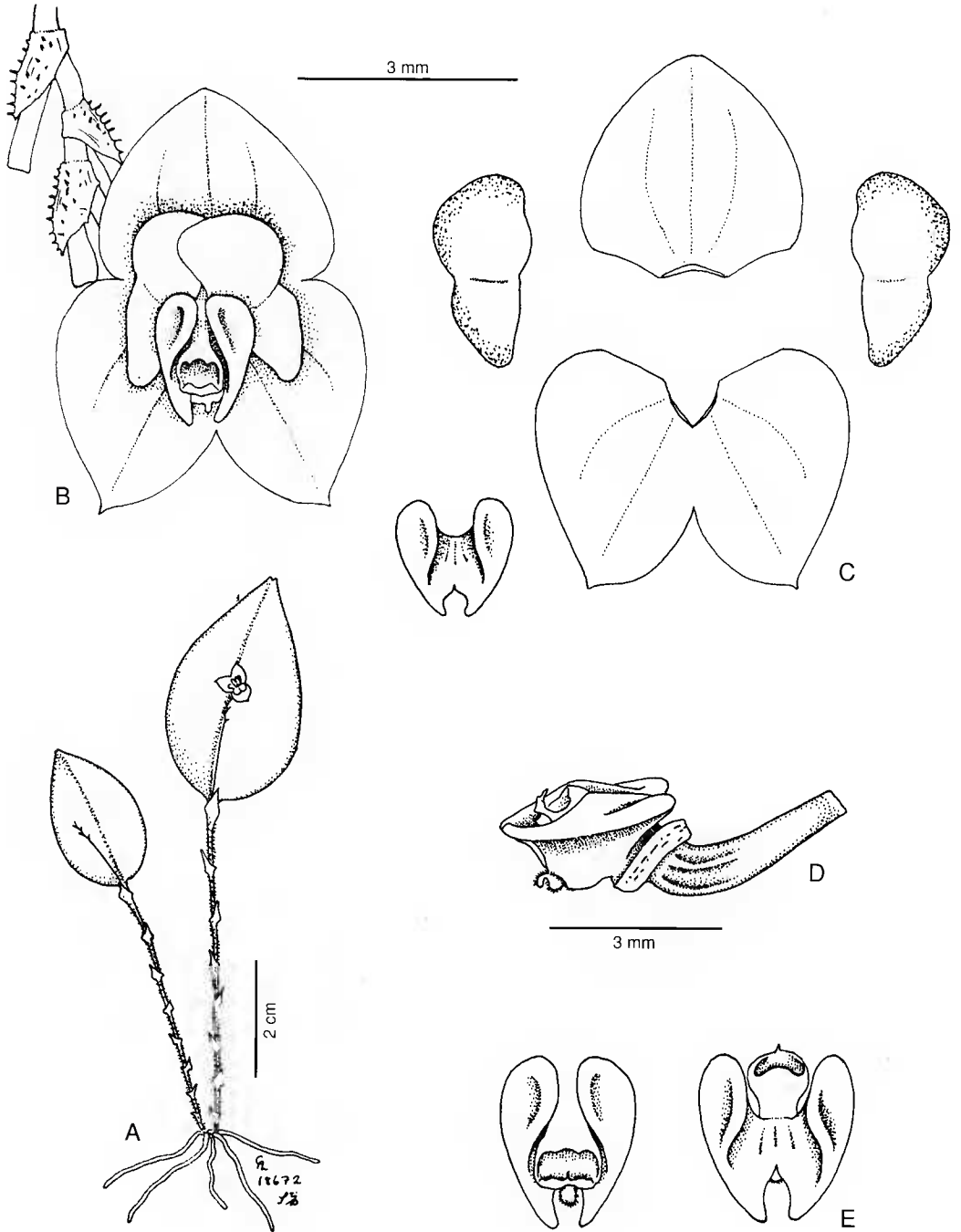


Fig. 1.—*Lepanthes cremersii*. A, habit; B, flower; C, floral parts; D, lip, column and ovary, side view; E, front views.

Plant medium in size, epiphytic, caespitose; roots slender. Ramicauls slender, erect, 2.5-5.5 cm long, enclosed by 8-9 long-ciliate, lepanthiform sheaths. Leaf erect, coriaceous, ovate, acute to subacute, 2.5-3.5 cm long, 1.5-2.2 cm wide, the base broadly cuneate or rounded, contracted into a petiole 1.5-2 mm long. Inflorescence a congested, distichous, successively few-flowered raceme, borne behind the leaf by a filiform peduncle 15-20 mm long; floral bracts muricate, 1.5 mm long; pedicels 1.5 mm long; ovary 2 mm long; sepals pale yellow, glabrous, subcarinate, the dorsal sepal broadly ovate, obtuse, 3 mm long, 3.4 mm wide, 3-veined, connate to the lateral sepals for 1 mm, the lateral sepals broadly ovate, oblique, obtuse, 3 mm long, 2.4 mm wide, connate 1 mm; petals microscopically cellular-pubescent, transversely bilobed, 1-1.4 mm long, 2.75 mm wide, the upper lobe obliquely oblong, rounded at the apex, slightly longer than the lower lobe, the lower lobe broadly triangular, rounded at the apex; lip glabrous, bilobed, with ovate laminae developed below the middle, surrounding the column, 1.8 mm long, the apices acute, free of the blade, the connectives broadly cuneate, the body broad, thick, connate to the column at the base, the appendix external, bisegmented, pubescent; column 1 mm long, the anther and the stigma apical.

This species from lowland French Guyana is distinguished from *L. helicocephala*, the only

other species known from French Guyana, by long-ciliate sheaths of the ramicauls, an ovate leaf, and a congested raceme borne along the back of the leaf. The sepals are broadly ovate and obtuse, and the lobes of the petals are also broad and obtuse. The blades of the lobes of the lip are developed below the middle, the lobes being free of blades above the middle. The body is thick with a pubescent, bisegmented appendix on the external surface.

Lepanthes helicocephala is most easily distinguished by microscopically ciliate sheaths of the ramicauls, acute sepals, and acute lower lobe of the petals.

Lepanthes cremersii occurs in transition forest between herbaceous vegetation on the Inselberg and the tall forest. The trees are between 10 and 12 meters tall and well-spaced with clear underwood. From the high humidity, the trunks and branches of the trees are often covered with bryophytes among which epiphytic orchids occur. *Lepanthes helicocephala* occurs in the tall forest at a low altitude of the subcostate region and central zone around Saül.

This species is named in honor of Georges CREMERS, formerly of ORSTOM, Cayenne, French Guyana, co-collector of this species. He is presently at P (Antenne ORSTOM, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Laboratoire de Phanérogamie, Paris).

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